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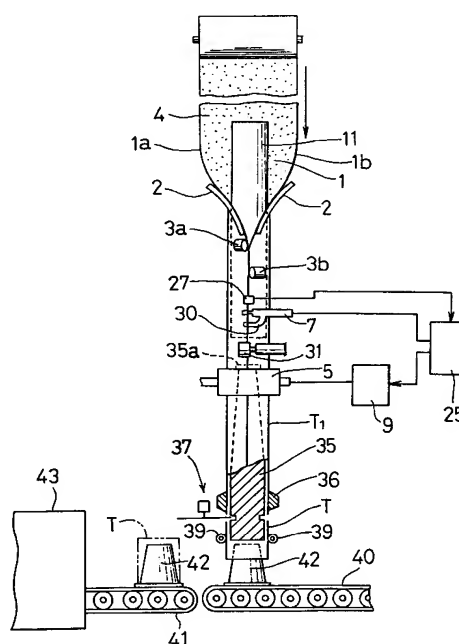
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(54) **Container with a tubular label thereon and apparatus and method for manufacturing the same**

(57) A continuous web of a preprinted heat shrinkable film (1) with a heat sensitive adhesive (4) on one surface thereof is wound around an outer periphery of a core member (11) in such a manner as to overlap opposite longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of the film (1) to one another and form a continuous tubular label (T1) with the heat sensitive adhesive (4) applied surface inwardly facing. A predetermined length of the continuous tubular label (T1) is cut into individual tubular labels (T), as the continuous tubular label (T1) is drawn downstream. The individual tubular label (T) is applied over a container (42) having a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section, from a portion of a smaller cross section of the container (42). The individual tubular label (T) applied over the container (42) is heated. Thereby, the individual tubular label (T) is shrunk into intimate contact with the container (42) with its portion of a larger cross section being bonded to the individual tubular label (T) via the heat sensitive adhesive (4) applied to the inwardly facing surface.

FIG. 1

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a container with a label thereon, and an apparatus and method for manufacturing the same, and is more particularly to a container having a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section and a tubular label fitted to the container, and an apparatus and method for forming the container.

In the following description, the term "tube (or tubular)" is used to refer to an elongated hollow body.

Conventionally, a container such as a bottle, can or the like, having a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section, is covered with a heat shrinkable plastic film which is previously formed into a tubular shape. The tubular film, (hereinafter referred to a tubular label) displays a trade mark, letters, ornamental designs and the like, as a label. The tubular label is formed by overlapping and sealing opposite longitudinal edges of a continuous web of the film together, and wound around a roll for storage, where the tubular label is flattened around the roll. When the tubular label is applied over the container, the tubular label is cut into individual tubular labels, each having a predetermined length, as the tubular label is unwound from the roll. Then, an unsealed end of the tubular label is opened by pulling the same outwardly via vacuum, and the tubular label is applied over the container from the opening end.

However, once the tubular label is flattened around the roll prior to being applied over the container, the folded edges are crimped or formed into a continuous crease. The continuous crease remains along the folded edges of the tubular label, after the tubular label is unwound from the roll. As a result, it is likely to invite distortion of the displaying information, and wrinkling at the folded portion of the tubular label.

In addition, since the container has a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section, when the tubular label is shrunk by heat shrinking process, the tubular label is likely to slip towards a portion of a smaller cross section. Further, since the continuous crease remains along the folded edges, and the tubular label has a tendency to come back to an original flattened shape, it is necessary to prepare the tubular label of a larger diameter than that of the container to facilitate application of the tubular label over the container. Accordingly, it is difficult to properly position the tubular label relating to the container before the tubular label is applied over the container. Consequently, the tubular label may be slipped towards an undesirable portion of the container.

To avoid the slippage of the film, it is conceivable that a heat sensitive adhesive is applied to an

inner surface of the tubular label. However, this arrangement is disadvantageous, since blocking may occur between contacting surfaces of the label via the heat sensitive adhesive, when the tubular label is folded into a flat shape for storage. This hesitates the tubular label from being easily opened during the application process. Accordingly, it is difficult to apply a sufficient amount of the adhesive to the tubular label.

An object of the present invention is to provide an apparatus and method for applying a label over a container, while avoiding any crease on the label, and wrinkling or distortion of an ornamental design or the like displayed on the label due to the crease, and easily and properly positioning the label to the container without slippage of the label to an undesirable portion of the container.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a container with a label thereon, the label being applied to the container without wrinkling or distortion of an ornamental design or the like displayed on the label.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the above objects, the method of the present invention includes steps of winding a continuous web of a preprinted heat shrinkable film with a heat sensitive adhesive on one surface thereof around an outer periphery of a core member in such a manner as to overlap opposite longitudinal edges of the film to one another and form a continuous tubular label with the heat sensitive adhesive applied surface inwardly facing, cutting a predetermined length of the continuous tubular label into individual tubular labels, as the continuous tubular label is drawn downstream, applying the individual tubular label over a container having a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section, from a portion of a smaller cross section of the container, and heating the individual tubular label applied over the container to cause the label to heat-shrink into intimate contact with the container with its portion of a larger cross section being bonded to the individual tubular label via the heat sensitive adhesive applied to the inwardly facing surface.

There is further provided the apparatus for manufacturing a container with a label includes means for winding a continuous web of a preprinted heat shrinkable film with a heat sensitive adhesive on one surface thereof around an outer periphery of a core member in such a manner as to overlap opposite longitudinal edges of the film to one another and form a continuous tubular label with the heat sensitive adhesive applied surface inwardly facing, means for cutting a predetermined length of the continuous tubular label into individual

tubular labels, as the continuous tubular label is drawn downstream, and applied over a container having a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section, from a portion of a smaller cross section of the container, and means for heating the individual tubular label applied over the container to cause the label to heat-shrink into intimate contact with the container with its portion of a larger cross section being bonded to the individual tubular label via the heat sensitive adhesive applied to the inwardly facing surface.

In the above method, the opposite longitudinal edges of the heat shrinkable film are overlapped to one another, and subsequently cut into the tubular label by the cutting means. Therefore, it is unnecessary to flatten the tubular label when winding the same around the roll prior to the application process. After applied over the container, the label is heated and subsequently shrunk. During shrinkage, an one end of the label intimately contacts the portion of a larger cross section, and the heat sensitive adhesive on the label is activated by heat, enabling the label to be bonded to the container. In this state, the label tends to slip towards a portion of a smaller cross section of the container due to the further shrinkage of the label. However, since the label is bonded at its one end to the container, the slippage can be effectively avoided. Thus, the label can be properly and intimately applied over the container via the heat sensitive adhesive. Another advantage associated with this method resides in the fact that, since the label need not be folded, a crease is unlikely to be formed, resulting in easy application of the label.

The above, and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the detailed description thereof read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is an elevational view with a partially cross section illustrating one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is an elevational view of an essential portion of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a schematic cross section illustrating a nozzle of FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 is a cross section illustrating a pair of pressing rollers in a state that they press opposite longitudinal edges of a film.

FIG. 5A is a schematic plan view illustrating a control system of the nozzle.

FIGS. 5B and 5C are schematic plan views illustrating moving states of the nozzle in accordance with positions of the longitudinal edges of the film.

FIG. 6 is the nozzle of another embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. 7A and 7B are elevational views in cross section illustrating shrinking states of the label.

FIG. 8A is a perspective view with a broken-out section illustrating the label in accordance with the present invention.

FIGS. 8B and 8C are perspective views illustrating the containers of other embodiments.

FIG. 9A is a schematic elevational view illustrating the application process of a tack label to the container.

FIG. 9B is a cross section of the container with the tack label.

FIGS. 10A, 10B and 10C are elevational views with partially cross section illustrating application process of the label in accordance with a further embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to FIG. 1, a continuous web of a heat shrinkable film 1 is wound around a roll. Letters, ornamental designs and the like are printed on one surface of the film 1. In a rolled state, the film 1 is provided on an entire area of an inwardly facing surface thereof with a hot melt adhesive 4 as a heat sensitive adhesive which is capable of being activated when heated. The heat shrinkable film 1 may be made of known materials, such as polyester, polyvinyl chloride, polystyrene, polypropylene and polyethylene. It is preferable that the film 1 is shrinkable in the lateral direction thereof by 20 % or more.

The film 1 is guided to a core member 11 made of a flat plate by a pair of guiding members 2, as a winding means, in such a manner as to be wound around an outer periphery of the core member 11. Thereby, opposite longitudinal edges of the film 1 are overlapped to one another such that the film 1 is formed into a tubular shape. A pair of guide rollers 3a and 3b press the film 1, the former pressing an edge 1a which is positioned outside of an edge 1b in an overlapped state, the latter pressing the edge 1b. A pair of intermittently feeding rollers 5 clamp and feed the film 1 in a flattened state downstream of the apparatus. An intermittently feeding mechanism 9 controls the intermittently feeding rollers 5 to feed a predetermined length of the film 1 downstream at each feeding process.

A nozzle 7 is disposed between the guide roller 3b and the intermittently feeding rollers 5 so as to discharge solvent 6 as a bonding agent therethrough to an inwardly facing surface of the edge 1a of the film 1. Referring to FIGS. 2 and 3, the nozzle 7 includes a nozzle body 8, a discharge opening

8a formed in the nozzle body 8, and a needle valve 10 which is movable for releasably closing the discharge opening 8a. The needle valve 10 is urged against the discharge opening 8a by a spring 12 to generally close the same. When an-
5 annular electromagnets 14, which is positioned at an end of the nozzle body 8, is magnetized, the elec-
tromagnets 14 attracts an attracted portion 10a of the needle valve 10 to move the needle valve 10
towards electromagnets 14 and away from the dis-
10 charge opening 8a. Thereby, the discharge open-
ing 8a opens, forcing against the spring force of the spring 12.

A tank 15 is filled with the solvent 6 and communicated with the nozzle body 8 via a hose 16. The solvent 6 can be discharged from the
15 nozzle port 7a by introducing compressed air into the tank 15. A tip portion of the nozzle port 7a is bent in such a direction to be perpendicular to the outside edge 1a of the film 1.

A spreading member 30 is integrally mounted to the nozzle body 8 and is positioned downstream of the nozzle port 7a. The spreading member 30
20 slightly contacts the outside edge 1a of the film 1 and spreads the solvent applied to the edge 1a. The position of the outside edge 1a is determined in accordance with the position of the spreading member 30, and the position of the inside edge 1b is determined by pressing the edge 1b with the
25 guide roller 3b such that a clearance L is defined between the overlapped longitudinal edges 1a and 1b. The nozzle port 7a is introduced into the clearance L in such a manner as to be spaced apart from the outside edge 1a.

The electromagnets 14 of the nozzle 7 is con-
35 nected with a control unit 25 to timely discharge the solvent 6 from the nozzle 7 in association with the intermittently feeding mechanism 9. This asso-
ciated operation is carried out such that the inter-
mittently feeding mechanism 9 and the nozzle 7
40 can be driven in synchronism, or with time lag. Referring to FIG. 5A, a L-shaped arm 20 is pro-
vided at its tip portion with the nozzle 7, and at its base portion with a nut member 20a which is
threadedly connected with a feed screw 23 which
45 is rotatable in both directions by a servomotor 21. The servomotor 21 is, in turn, connected with the control unit 25.

A sensor 27, for example, an image sensor, photoelectric cell and camera, is positioned adja-
50 cent to the nozzle 7 in the upstream side thereof, and connected with the control unit 25 to detect the longitudinal edges 1a and 1b of the film 1. Accord-
ingly, the control unit 25 controls the servomotor 21 in accordance with the information transmitted from
55 the sensor to properly rotate the feed screw 23, enabling the nozzle port 7a to follow the edges 1a and 1b of the film 1, even if the edges 1a and 1b

deviate from a predetermined feeding line, that is, moves in a zigzag direction.

A pair of pressing rollers 31 and 32 are dis-
posed between the nozzle 7 and the intermittently
5 feeding roller 5 to form a continuous tubular label T1 by pressing and bonding the overlapped long-
itudinal edges 1a and 1b of the film 1. The
pressing roller 31 is provided thereon with protru-
sions 31 extending in the axial direction of a sup-
10 porting axis 31a, as illustrated in FIG. 4.

Referring back to FIG. 1, a label opening mem-
ber 35 is positioned inside of the continuous label
15 T1, and movably suspended from the pair of the intermittently feeding rollers 5 at an upper bulging
portion 35a. A lower portion of the label opening member 35 is of a round cross section, around of
which an annular cutting groove is formed in its
circumferential direction.

A label fixing jig 36 is positioned at a terminal
20 end of the continuous label T1 to fix the label T1 in position in cooperation with the label opening member 35 to avoid undesirable deviation in a
cutting process. The label fixing jig 36 may be in the form of a collet chuck of a three-point tighten-
25 ing type being contactable and expandable by air pressure. A disk-shaped label cutter, which is rotat-
able about its axis, is circularly movable around the continuous label T1 along the annular cutting
groove of the label opening member 35. Rollers 39
30 feed an individual label T cut from the continuous label T1 downstream.

Container transport mechanisms 40 and 41, each comprising a belt conveyor, intermittently or
35 successively transport containers 42 to a position just under the film 1, in which the labels T are
respectively applied over the containers 42. The containers, each having the label T are transported to a shrink mechanism 43 to apply the heat over
the label T. Each container 42 is of a rounded or
40 rectangular shape in plan, and has a bottom wall at its one end, and a side wall which gradually de-
creases in cross section towards the bottom wall.

In accordance with the apparatus of the above
45 arrangement, the forming and application pro-
cesses of the label will be described hereinafter.

The film 1 is fed downwardly along the guiding
members 2 and the guide rollers 3a and 3b by the
rotation of the intermittently feeding rollers 5 such
that the opposite longitudinal edges 1a and 1b of
50 the film 1 are overlapped to one another. In this
state, the clearance L is defined between the over-
lapped longitudinal edges 1a and 1b by the
spreading member 30 and the guide roller 3b. The
nozzle port 7a of the nozzle 7 is introduced into the
55 clearance L in such a manner as to be perpendic-
ular to the edge 1a which is positioned over the
opposite edge 1b, thereby effectively and securely
discharging the bonding agent to the edge of the

film 1. The compressed air is introduced into the tank 15 to supply the solvent 6 into the nozzle body 8, while the control unit 25 magnetize the electromagnet 14, enabling the needle valve 10 to move away from the discharge opening 8a. Accordingly, the solvent 6 is discharged from the nozzle port 19.

The sensor 27 detects the longitudinal edges 1a and 1b of the film 1 when the nozzle 7 discharges the solvent 6 to the film 1. Therefore, the detected information is transmitted to the control unit 25 which subsequently controls the servomotor 21. Thereby, if the longitudinal edges 1a and 1b move in a zigzag direction as illustrated in FIGS. 5B and 5C, the servomotor 21 rotates the feed screw 23, and moves the arm 20 along the feed screw 23. Thereby, the nozzle 7 follows the edges 1a and 1b such that the nozzle port 7a faces the edge 1a, keeping a predetermined distance therefrom. In this state, when the solvent 6 is discharged to the moving film 1, it is unlikely to invite an uneven application of the solvent 6 to the film 1, which may form an undesirable ridge of the solvent 6 on the film 1.

The spreading member 30 spreads and smoothens the solvent 6 discharged to the outside edge 1a of the film 1, and the pressing rollers 31 and 32 press the edges 1a and 1b together, securing the bonding state therebetween.

The thus formed continuous label T1 is fed downstream from a lower end of the label opening member 35, and is partially applied over the container with its bottom wall facing upward. In this regard, the container is transported to a stand-by position which is just below the continuous label T1. Then, the control unit 25 stops the intermittently feeding rollers 5 to stop feeding of the film 1, and simultaneously releases the electromagnet 14 of the nozzle 7 from the magnetized condition such that the spring 12 forces the needle valve 10 to the discharge opening 8a for closing the same. Thus, the nozzle 7 instantly stops discharging of the solvent 6. Since the space between the nozzle port 7a and the edge 1a of the film 1 is maintained in this state, it is unlikely that the solvent 6, which has been discharged and remains around the nozzle port 7a, sticks to the film 1 and undesirably melts the same.

As a consequence, it is possible to properly and easily adjust the amount of the solvent 6 to be discharged.

Then, the label fixing jig 36 fixes the continuous label T1 in position by pressing a peripheral surface thereof, and then the cutter 37 moves along the annular cutting groove of the label opening member 35, and cut the continuous label T1 into the individual label T of a predetermined length. Then, the individual label is fed downstream

by the rollers 39. The individual label T is placed over the container 42, as illustrated in FIG. 7A. In this regard, the rollers 39 may be omitted, since the individual label T falls downward to be applied over the container 42 by gravity.

The container 42 with the label T thereon is transported to the shrink mechanism 43, in which the heat is applied over the individual label T. The individual label T is subsequently shrunk by the heat, and contacts at the lower end thereof a diametrically larger end 42a of the container 42. In this regard, the hot melt adhesive 4 is activated such that the lower end of the individual label T is bonded to the container 42. The shrinkage of the label T is further progressed. Therefore the label T entirely conforms around the peripheral surface of the container 42. During this shrinking process, the label T is unlikely to slip towards a diametrically smaller portion 42b, since the label T is bonded to the diametrically larger portion 42a of the container 42. As a result, the label T is maintained at a proper position of the container 42, as illustrated in FIG. 7B. In this regard, it is preferable to apply the heat to the lower end of the label T at first for more secured application of the label T.

Thus, the containers 42 are successively transported, while the individual labels T are formed and respectively applied over the containers 42.

With this arrangement, since the continuous cylindrical label T1 need not be wound around the roll in a flattened state, it is unlikely to cause creases or the like on the film. Accordingly, wrinkling of the label, the distortion of the displaying designs or the like can be effectively avoided. In addition, a series of the operations to make the label T from the continuous film 1, and apply the label T over the container 42, can be successively carried out.

Further, since the continuous label T1 need not be stored in a rolled state, the label T1 is unlikely to be deteriorated in quality in a relatively prolonged period of time, thus contributing to the easy storing and controlling of the label.

In this embodiment, the description, concerning the advantage effected by forming the spacing between the nozzle port 7a and the film 1, was made, particularly when the film 1 is temporarily stopped in the intermittent feeding. However, it is a matter of course that the solvent 6 is unlikely to melt the film 1, drop along the film, and protrude outwardly from the portion of the film 1 to be bonded, when the apparatus is out of operation for a predetermined period of time.

It is not necessary to limit the discharging direction of the solvent 6 to this embodiment. That is, the solvent 6 may be discharged to the edge 1b which is positioned inside of the edge 1a by directing the nozzle port 7a to the edge 1b. Further, the

solvent 6 may be discharged to both edges 1a and 1b.

It is not necessary to limit means for bonding the longitudinal edges 1a and 1b together to the solvent 6. Instead, a bonding agent may be employed in this embodiment. The bonding agent is unlikely to melt the film 1, drop along the film 1 and protrude outwardly from the portion of the film 1 to be bonded.

In this embodiment, the heat sensitive adhesive 4 is entirely applied over the inwardly facing surface of the label T. However, the heat sensitive adhesive 4 may be partially applied to either end of the label T, the end corresponding to the diametrically larger portion 42a of the container 42, as illustrated in FIG. 8A. Accordingly, it is essential to apply the heat sensitive adhesive 4 to at least one end of the label T. In this regard, the residual area of the label T may optionally have the heat sensitive adhesive 4 thereon. In this case, since the label T need not be folded into a flat shape, it is possible to apply a sufficient amount of the heat sensitive adhesive 4 to the entire area of the inner surface of the film 1.

Referring to FIGS. 8B and 8C, the container 42 may be of a combination of rectangular and circular cross sections, and may include anular concave. Further, the container 42 may be in the form of a circular cone, circular truncated cone, pyramid, truncated pyramid or the like. In this regard, it is essential that the container 42 has a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section. Further, the container 42 may be formed from a synthetic resin material, glass, metal, etc.

Referring to FIGS. 9A and 9B, a tack label S may be attached to the bottom surface of the container 42, after the container 42 passes through the shrink mechanism 43, to display information on a partial or entire area of the bottom surface. A label end T2, which is opposite to the end corresponding to the diametrically larger portion 42a of the container 42, is bent to conform around a bottom protrusion 42c extending along a peripheral edge of the bottom wall of the container 42. A belt conveyor 45 is disposed downstream of the shrink mechanism 43. A plurality of the tack labels S are attached to a release paper 47, and positioned above the containers 42 which are transferred by the belt conveyor 45. Then, the tack labels S are successively released from the release paper 47, and respectively attached to the containers 42, while the label end T2 is pressed towards the bottom surface of the container 42 with each tack label S.

In case the tack label S is made of a thermoplastic film, it is possible to bring the tack label S into intimate contact with the bottom surface of the container 42 by pressing the tack label S to the

bottom surface from above with a label pressing member 17, which is previously heated. This arrangement effectively works if the bottom surface of the container 42 has a protruded portion, or other irregular configurations. It is also possible to employ a label with a heat sensitive adhesive thereon, instead of the tack label S.

The tack label S may be placed on the bottom surface of the container 42 at first, as illustrated in FIG. 10A. Accordingly, the label T with the heat sensitive adhesive thereon is applied over the container 42 from above, and shrunk into intimate contact with the container by heat, while holding the tack label S therewith, as illustrated in FIGS. 10B and 10C.

The diametrically larger or smaller portions of the container 42 is not necessarily limited to a case, in which the container 42 is of a rounded cross section, but includes a case, in which the container 42 is of a varying cross section, such as an elliptical, rectangular cross section.

In case the film 1 is laminated with a material of polyvinylidene chloride, ethylene vinyl alcohol copolymer or the like, or laminated with aluminum via vapor deposition, the film 1 improves a gas barrier property of the container 42. When the hot melt adhesive 4 is applied to the both ends of the label T, and the tack label S is attached to the bottom surface of the container 42, as illustrated in FIGS. 9 and 10, the gas barrier property of the container 42 can be further improved.

In case the film 1 or ink applied thereto exhibits its ultraviolet ray absorbing property, even if the container is made of a transparent material, harmful ultraviolet rays may be reduced or cut off with the film 1 or the ink such that contents inside of the container 42 can maintain its quality.

It is not essential to limit the heat sensitive adhesive to the hot melt adhesive, which is to be applied to the label T. It is possible to employ a delayed tack adhesive having such a property that it does not exhibit tackiness in a room temperature, but becomes tacky when heated, and maintains its tacky property for a prolonged period of time after cooling. Accordingly, various types of adhesive may be employed in the present application.

This specification is by no means intended to restrict the present invention to the preferred embodiments set forth therein. Various modifications to the container, method and apparatus of the present invention, as described herein, may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined in the appended claims.

Claims

1. A method of manufacturing a container with a label, which comprises:

winding a continuous web of a preprinted heat shrinkable film (1) with a heat sensitive adhesive (4) on one surface thereof around an outer periphery of a core member (11) in such a manner as to overlap opposite longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1) to one another and form a continuous tubular label (T1) with said heat sensitive adhesive (4) applied surface inwardly facing;

cutting a predetermined length of said continuous tubular label (T1) into individual tubular labels (T), as said continuous tubular label (T1) is drawn downstream;

applying said individual tubular label (T) over a container (42) having a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section, from a portion of a smaller cross section of said container (42); and

heating said individual tubular label (T) applied over said container (42) to cause said label (T) to heat-shrink into intimate contact with said container (42) with its portion of a larger cross section being bonded to said individual tubular label (T) via said heat sensitive adhesive (4) applied to said inwardly facing surface.

2. A method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

defining a clearance (L) between said overlapped longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1);

introducing a nozzle port (7a) of a nozzle (7) into said clearance (L), said nozzle (7) being controllably discharging a bonding agent (6);

spacing said nozzle port (7a) apart from one of said longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1), to which said bonding agent (6) is applied;

discharging said bonding agent (6) to the one of said longitudinal edges (1a, 1b); and

bonding said opposite longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) together via said bonding agent (6).

3. A method of manufacturing a container with a label, which comprises:

winding a continuous web of a preprinted heat shrinkable film (1) with a heat sensitive adhesive (4) on one surface thereof around an outer periphery of a core member (11) in such a manner as to overlap opposite longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1) to one another and form a continuous tubular label (T1) with

said heat sensitive adhesive (4) applied surface inwardly facing;

cutting a predetermined length of said continuous tubular label (T1) into individual tubular labels (T), as said continuous tubular label (T1) is drawn downstream and partially applied over said container (42) having a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section, from a portion of a smaller cross section of said container (42); and

heating said individual tubular label (T) applied over said container (42) to cause said label (T) to heat-shrink into intimate contact with said container (42) with its portion of a larger cross section being bonded to said individual tubular label (T) via said heat sensitive adhesive (4) applied to said inwardly facing surface.

4. A method as set forth in claim 3, further comprising:

defining a clearance (L) between said overlapped longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1);

introducing a nozzle port (7a) of a nozzle (7) into said clearance (L), said nozzle (7) being controllably discharging a bonding agent (6);

spacing said nozzle port (7a) apart from one of said longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1), to which said bonding agent (6) is applied;

discharging said bonding agent (6) to the one of said longitudinal edges (1a, 1b); and

bonding said opposite longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) together via said bonding agent (6).

5. An apparatus for manufacturing a container with a label, which comprises:

means for winding a continuous web of a preprinted heat shrinkable film (1) with a heat sensitive adhesive (4) on one surface thereof around an outer periphery of a core member (11) in such a manner as to overlap opposite longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1) to one another and form a continuous tubular label (T1) with said heat sensitive adhesive (4) applied surface inwardly facing;

means for cutting a predetermined length of said continuous tubular label (T1) into individual tubular labels (T), as said continuous tubular label (T1) is drawn downstream, and applied over a container (42) having a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section, from a portion of a smaller cross section of said container (42); and

means for heating said individual tubular label (T) applied over said container (42) to

cause said label (T) to heat-shrink into intimate contact with said container (42) with its portion of a larger cross section being bonded to said individual tubular label (T) via said heat sensitive adhesive (4) applied to said inwardly facing surface.

6. An apparatus for manufacturing a tubular label, which comprises:

means for winding a continuous web of a preprinted heat shrinkable film (1) with a heat sensitive adhesive (4) on one surface thereof around an outer periphery of a core member (11) in such a manner as to overlap opposite longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1) to one another;

a nozzle (7) for discharging a bonding agent (6) to at least one of said opposite longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1) to bond said longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) together to form a continuous tubular label (T1);

means for feeding said continuous tubular label (T1) downstream of said winding means;

means for cutting a predetermined length of said continuous tubular label (T1) into individual tubular labels (T), as said continuous tubular label (T1) is drawn downstream;

means for successively transporting containers (42), each of said containers (42) having a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section, to such a position that said individual tubular labels (T), which move downstream from said cutting means, are respectively applied over said individual tubular labels (T); and

means for heating said individual tubular label (T) applied over said container (42) to cause said label (T) to heat-shrink into intimate contact with said container (42) with its portion of a larger cross section being bonded to said individual tubular label (T) via said heat sensitive adhesive (4) applied to said inwardly facing surface.

7. An apparatus as set forth in claim 6, wherein a clearance (L) is defined between said overlapped longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1), into which a nozzle port (7a) of said nozzle (7) is inserted, and a tip portion of said nozzle port (7a) is spaced apart from the one of said longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1), to which said bonding agent (6) is applied.

8. An apparatus as set forth in claim 7, wherein said nozzle port (7a) of said nozzle (7) is bent in such a direction to be perpendicular to said edge of said film, to which said bonding agent (6) is applied.

9. An apparatus as set forth in claim 7, further comprising a sensor (27) for detecting the one of said longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1), to which said bonding agent (6) is applied, and means for moving said nozzle (7) in a direction transverse to the feeding direction of said film (1) in accordance with detected information transmitted from said sensor (27) in such a manner as to maintain a predetermined distance from the one of said longitudinal edges (1a, 1b).

10. An apparatus as set forth in claim 7, wherein means for spreading said bonding agent (6) applied to said edge of said film (1) is provided downstream of said nozzle port (7a) of said nozzle (7) in such a manner as to abut against said edge.

11. An apparatus as set forth in claim 6, wherein said feeding means of said film (1) comprises a pair of feeding rollers (5) for clamping and intermittently feeding said continuous tubular label(T1), and said nozzle (7) is associated with a pair of said feeding rollers (5) in such a manner as to discharge said bonding agent (6) in a moving state of said film (1), and stop discharging of said bonding agent (6) in a stopped state of said film (1).

12. An apparatus as set forth in claim 11, wherein a pair of pressing rollers (31, 32) are provided between said nozzle (7) and said feeding rollers (5) in such a manner as to press said overlapped longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of said film (1).

13. A container with a label thereon, comprising:
a container (42) having a portion of a gradually decreasing cross section;

a tubular label (T) formed by overlapping and bonding opposite longitudinal edges (1a, 1b) of a heat shrinkable film (1);

said tubular label (T) applied over said container (42) via heat-shrinking; and

a heat sensitive adhesive (4) applied to an inner surface of said label (T) and at least a portion of said label corresponding to a portion of a larger cross section of said container (42).

14. A container with a label thereon as set forth in claim 13, wherein the opposite edge of said tubular label (T) to the portion corresponding to the portion of a larger cross section of said container (42) is bent to be placed on an adjacent bottom surface of said container (42), and a label (S) in the form of sheet is attached to said bottom surface in such a manner as to

be positioned inside or outside of said tubular label (T).

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FIG. 1

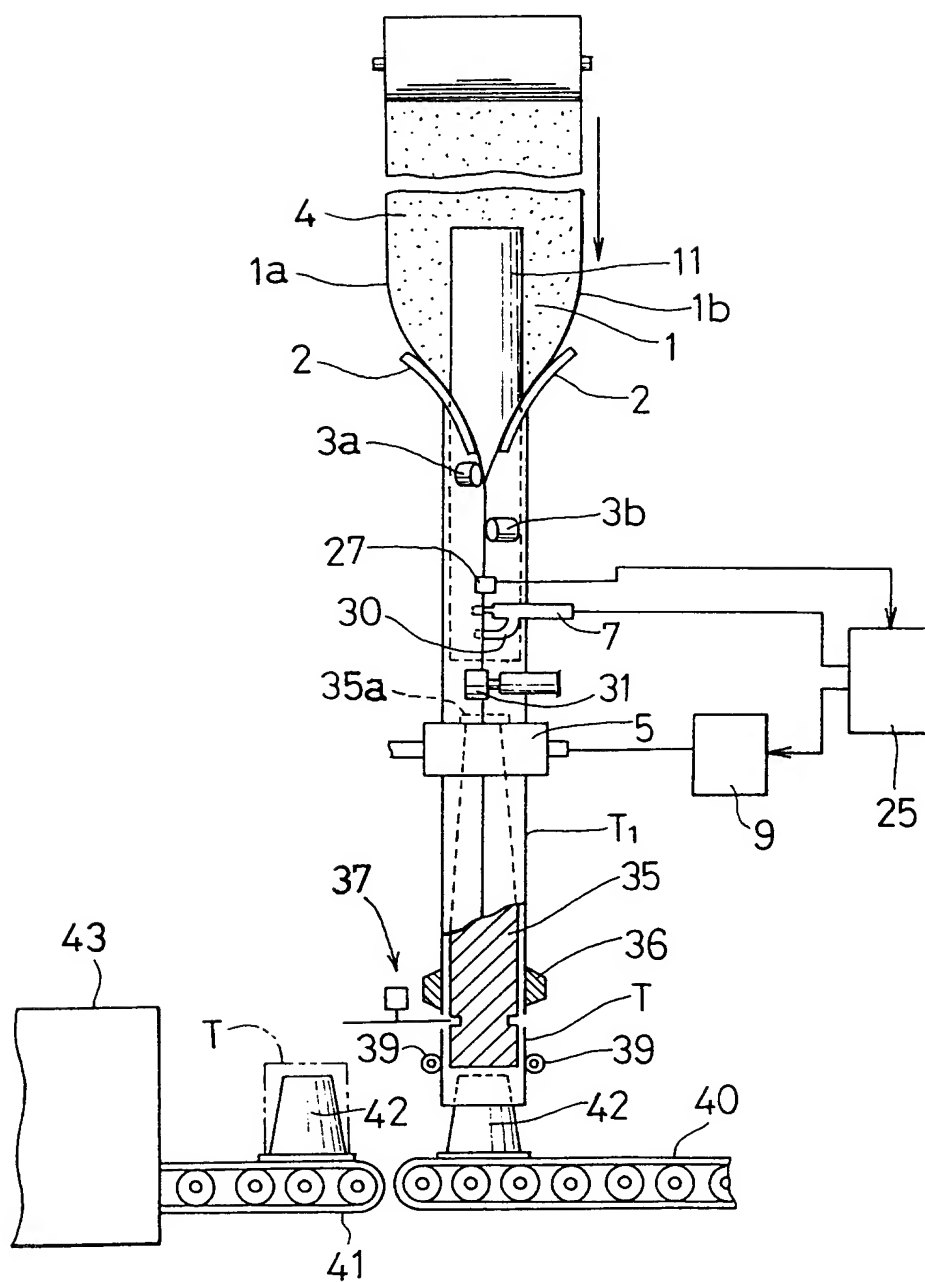


FIG. 2

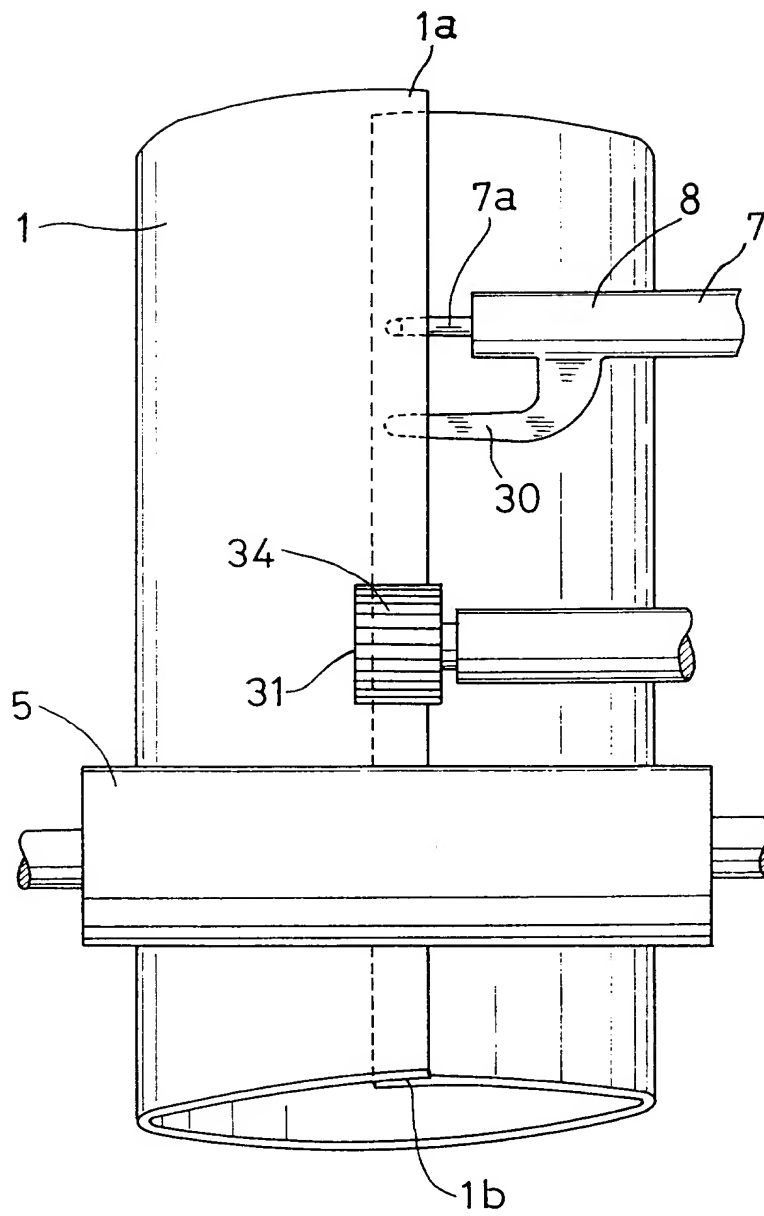


FIG. 3

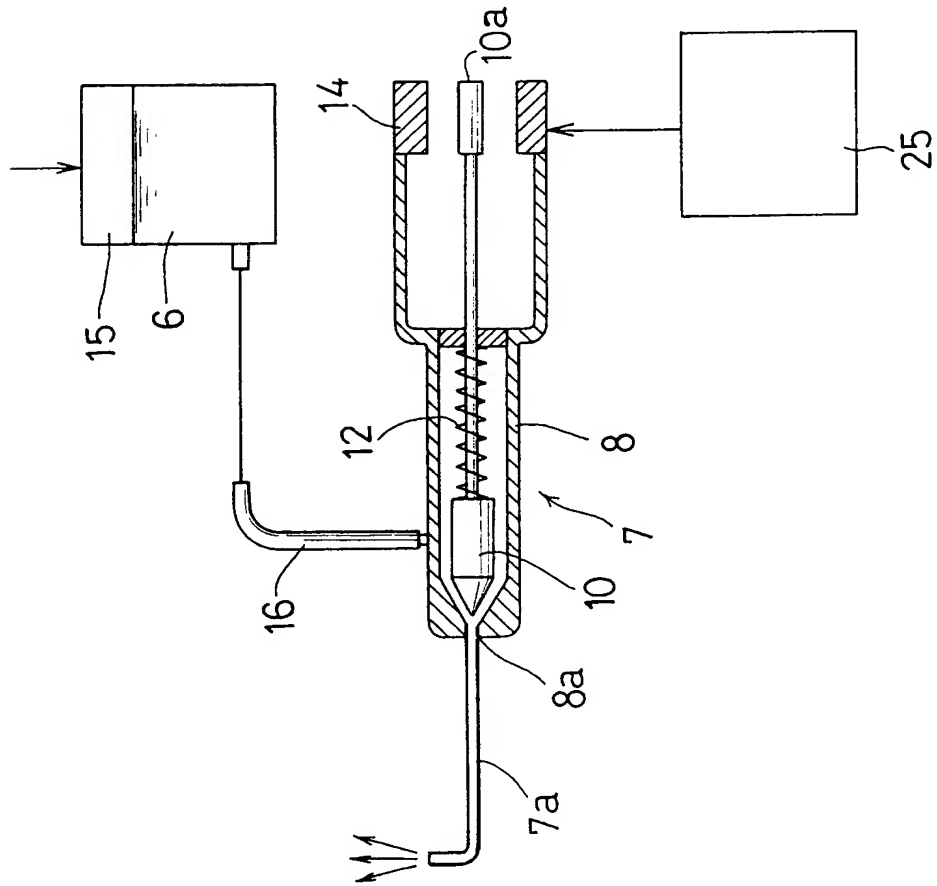


FIG. 4

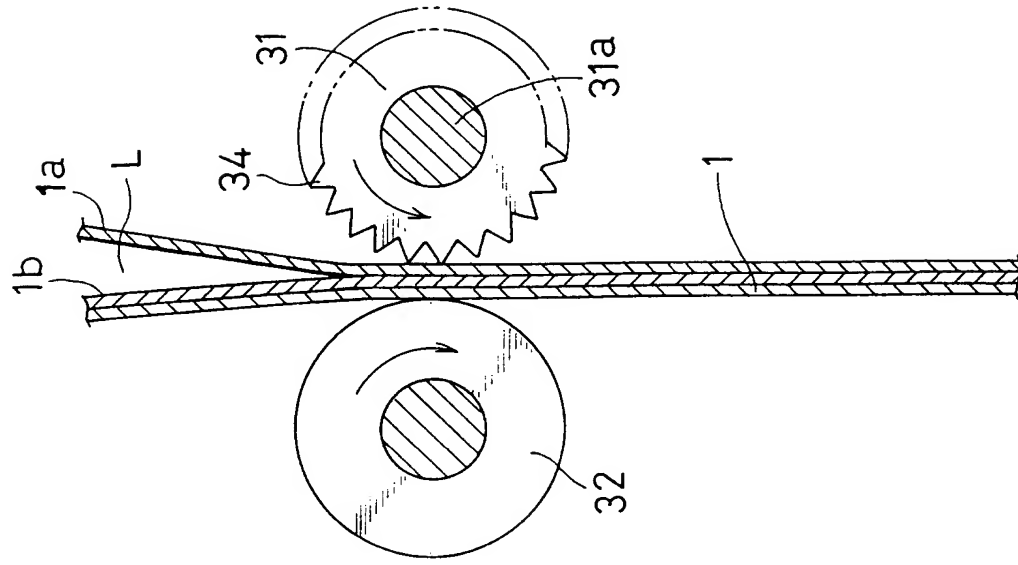


FIG. 5A

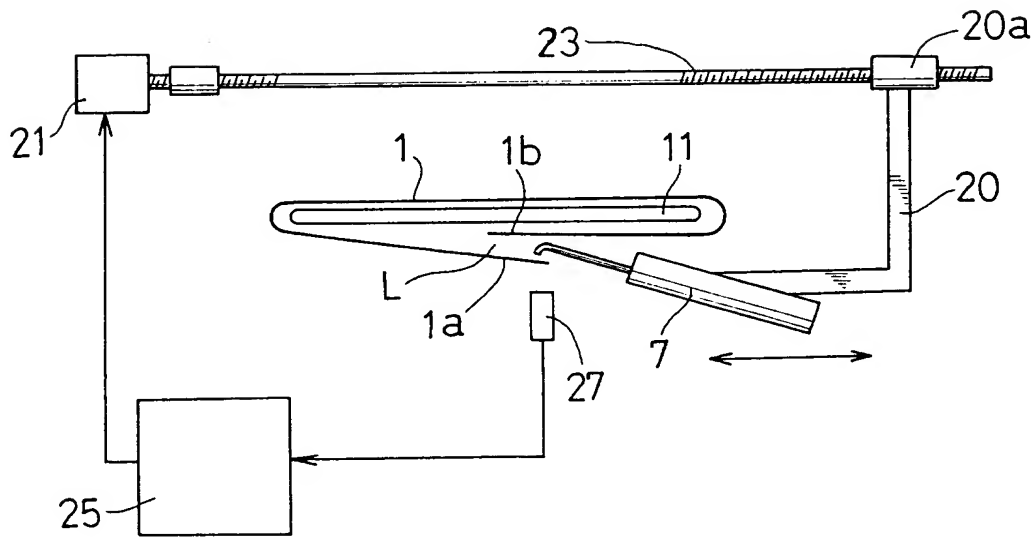


FIG. 5B

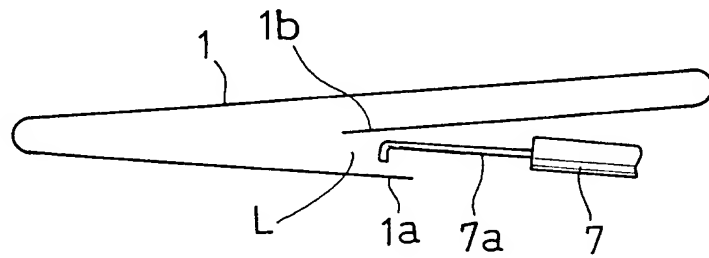


FIG. 5C

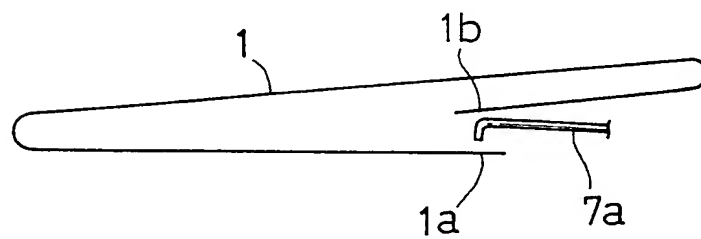


FIG. 6

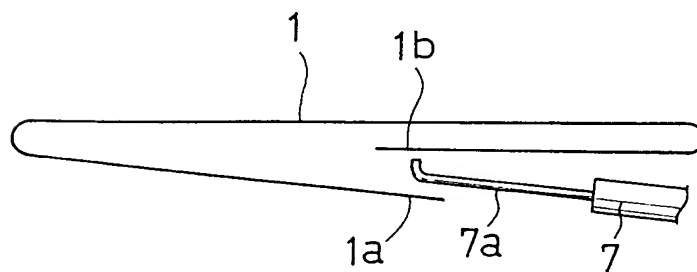


FIG. 7A

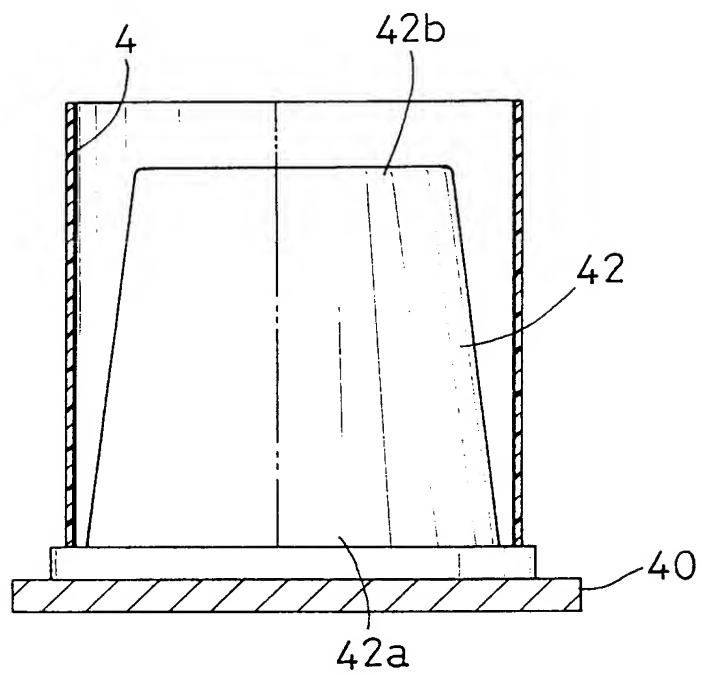


FIG. 7B

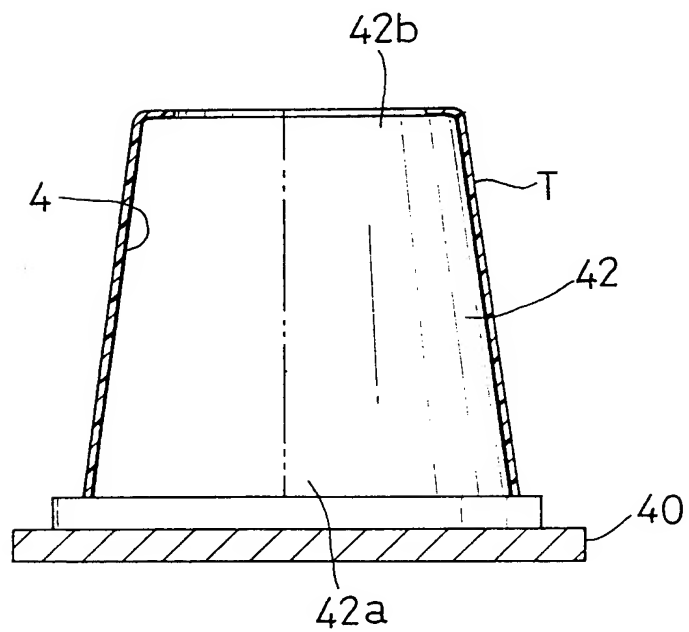


FIG. 8A

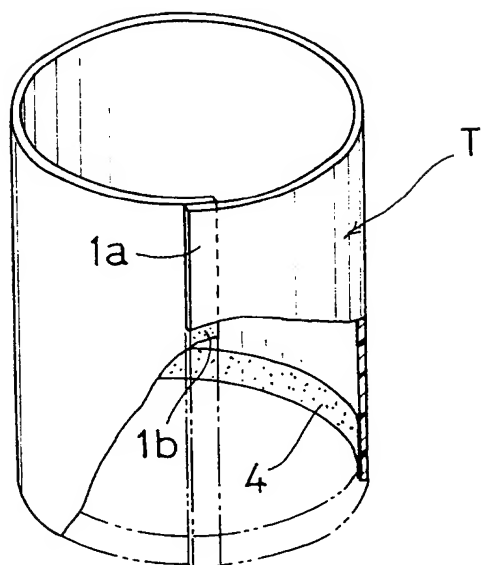


FIG. 8B

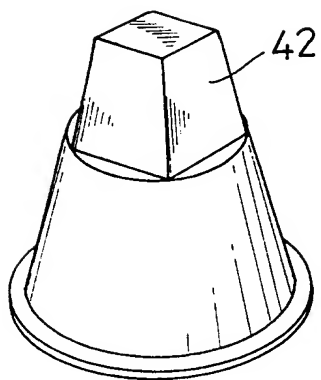


FIG. 8C

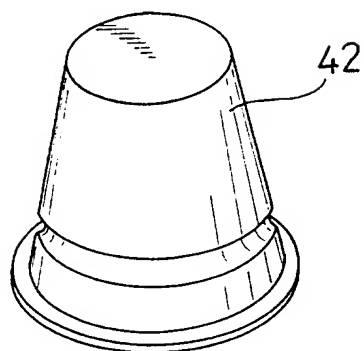


FIG. 9A

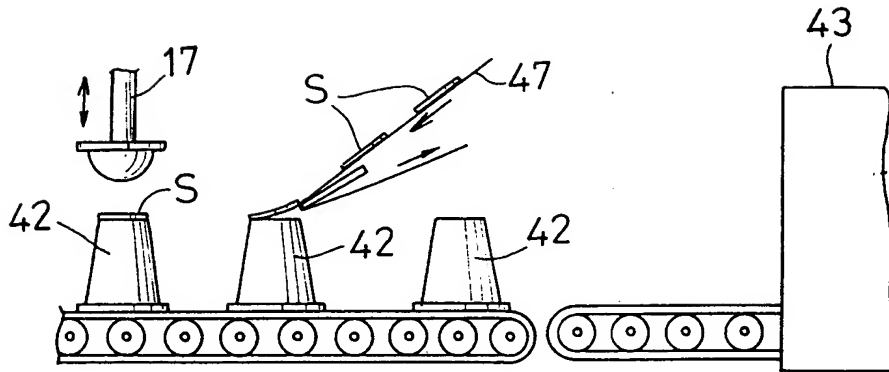


FIG. 9B

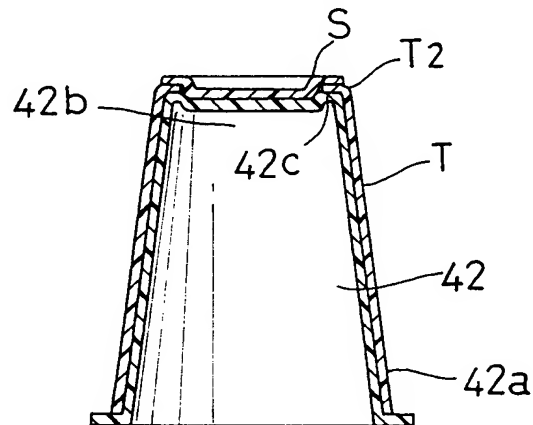


FIG. 10A

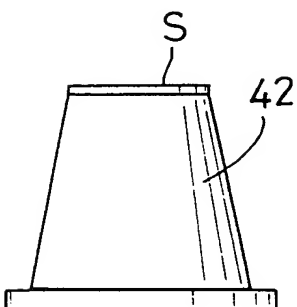


FIG. 10B

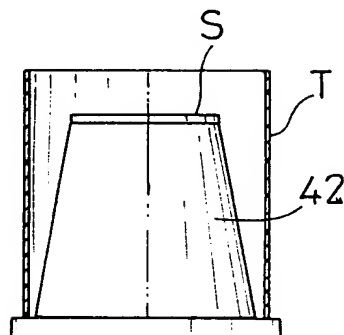
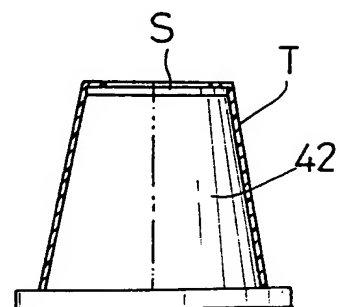


FIG. 10C





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 95 25 0148

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
A	US-A-3 984 005 (AMBERG) * column 8, line 55 - line 68 * * column 4, line 57 - column 5, line 40; figure 9 * ---	1,3,5,6	B65C3/06 B65D25/36
A	US-A-4 014 734 (PATTERSON) * abstract; figure 1 * ---	1,3,5,6	
A	FR-A-2 631 924 (SOCIÉTÉ D'INGÉNIERIE AFRIQUAFER) ---	1,3,5,6	
A	FR-A-2 344 453 (ALUMINIUM COMPANY OF AMERICA) ---	1,3,5,6	
X	EP-A-0 408 016 (SUMITOMO BAKELITE COMPANY LIMITED) ---	13	
Y	* column 2, line 27 - line 31; figure 3 * ---	14	
Y	EP-A-0 560 687 (MONOPLAST S.A.) * column 3, line 13 - line 15 * ---	14	
A	EP-A-0 313 406 (MITSUI TOATSU CHEMICALS INC.) -----	13	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6) B65C B67B B29C
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 21 September 1995	Examiner Martínez Navarro, A.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application I : document cited for other reasons ----- & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			